



The arrival of the Beaujolais Nouveau for 2006 had special meaning for loyal patrons of “Chez Mathilde!”

A tradition in Aruba celebrating its eighteenth year, the uncorking of the Beaujolais Nouveau is always a special event thanks to “Chez Mathilde” and the spirits department of Aruba Trading Company. For loyal patrons and lovers of the gourmet restaurant that have lamented its closing for nearly three months for renovations, the occasion of the uncorking of the young wine was a true cause for celebration, as it also marked the reopening of this favorite dining spot.

As restaurant owner Raoul Henriquez describes it, “Chez Mathilde” has undergone an “extreme makeover,” and is now reincarnated as two restaurants under one roof, “Matilde” and “M.” The change of the spelling of the name is a correction, as the discovery of an heirloom brooch revealed that all these years “Mathilde” was not how the namesake ancestor spelled her name. This part of the restaurant will retain the dress code and elegance for which it has always been known.

The new “M” section of the restaurant, which will occupy the front of the refurbished historical building reflects a more casual atmosphere, and will feature a special, moderately priced menu.

The six course menu that accompanied the ritual opening of the Beaujolais Nouveau from the George DeBoeuf Wineries was anything but moderately priced, but well worth it to the patrons that consider attending the event a must. This includes not only residents, but also island visitors such as Joe and Valerie of Roseland, New Jersey, who are vacationing in Aruba for the nineteenth consecutive year and actually plan their vacation around the uncorking of the Beaujolais Nouveau. Joe expressed that they were “thrilled that the weather did not interfere; and also very excited to see what the owners have done with the place. I would kill to have their new wine and champagne cellar. Dining at “Matilde” is something we make it a point to do several times during our stay, and attending this event is the highlight of our vacation.”

This year, event organizers cleverly took advantage of the restaurant’s uncompleted condition, and an “under-construction” theme accompanied the party. The staff, usually clad in tuxedos or formal serving dress, instead wore sheer designer worker’s overalls, made by the creative marketing staff, artistically splattered with paint and emblazoned with this year’s Beaujolais Nouveau label.

A warm welcome and thank you for attending was extended to the gathering by host Raoul; echoed by Gilberto (Juni) Croes of Aruba Trading Company. Along with Jorge Curiel, marketing manager of the spirits department, they invited Rene Kan to perform the ritual uncorking and the honor of the first taste, which he executed with a flourish, and then all had the pleasure of enjoying this “young fruity wine.”

The company soon retired to the main dining room to enjoy such dishes as “Construction Consommé,” “Wild Boar Keshi-Yena’ and “Hungry Men’s Pizza”; a laborers’ menu, but with the elegant “Matilde” gourmet flair. The new décor, light and bright, added to the festive ambiance of the event. Particularly impressive were dozens of classically framed LCD plasma screens, which displayed a continually changing program of photographs of the great art of the world, with emphasis on the Impressionist period. The luminosity of the screens definitely enhanced the works on view, and visionary art connoisseur Raoul, expressed that he considers it an optimal way to view the world’s great paintings as the presentation gives them additional depth.

This year’s uncorking, which is always eagerly awaited, had additional significance for those attending, as they could now say “Beaujolais Nouveau and Matilde va arrive!”